2: Hauck et al. D.E-5 (1952-1954) 1958 AO? Central Thai AO? Bang Chan

## SUMMARY

A general description is given of conditions in a Siamese rice village, 1952-54, as they relate to food supply and food habits. Activities at various seasons of the year are described. The heavy work seasons occurred during transplanting and harvest. In the dry season, many ceremonials and festivals were held in which food played an important role. Such occasions provided opportunity to "make merit" and add to one's prestige as did the regular offering of food to the priests, throughout the year. The relatively large financial obligations undertaken by those sponsoring ceremonies was a major factor in the economy of the village.

Food was mostly home produced and an important factor in the standard of living was the number of productive hands available. Rice was the first essential for any meal. Home milled rice was used, even in part, only by a minority of households. Fish, fresh or preserved, was the food next in importance to rice. Use of flesh foods other than fish was probably inhibited by Buddhist tenets which prohibit the taking of life, but some poultry, oxen, and other flesh foods were used. Nearly all of the families in Bang Chan raised chickens, and some raised ducks, but about 3/5 of all eggs produced were sold. Every family had some sort of kitchen garden, including banana trees and other plants, but spices and chili were much more commonly grown than vegetables and fruit. Swamp cabbage, the green leafy vegetable used most often, grew wild in the canals. A calendar of fresh foods commonly used in Bang Chan is presented.

Cash expenditures for food were small. When canals were navigable, boat venders brought produce and during the busy work seasons farmers often bought fish as well as the usual foods: onions, garlic, limes, coconut, palm sugar and small amounts of vegetables.

Many households increased their income by the sale of eggs, vegetables gathered from the canal and other items. Culture of tilapia and mushrooms, begun during the period of study, was undertaken by a considerable number of farmers between 1953 and 1955. Both enterprises were apparently regarded primarily as a supplementary source of cash rather than as a means of improving the home food supply, and both efforts had been largely if not entirely abandoned by 1957.

Preparation of some typical dishes, meal service and techniques of eating are described. For adults, two meals a day were usual, except during the busy work seasons when a third meal might be eaten. Menus were similar for all. Two observations from records of school children were 1) that over 90% of them ate snacks, many of which were bought from venders on the school grounds. Sweets and fruit were the

244 Vegetables and Fruit. - Although kitchen-gardening has been encouraged by the Thai government, vegetables and fruit were grown in Bang Chan to a limited extent only. Every family had some sort of kitchen garden, but many edible plants which can be grown in the village were grown by relatively few families. The list of fruits grown in Bang Chan in 1948-49 (Sharp et al., 1953) included four times as many items as were grown by one or more of the 11 families that participated in the dietary study. The list of vegetables and spice plants grown or gathered by these families included 27 items, as compared to 41 listed by Sharp et al. Spices and chili were more commonly grown than vegetables and fruit.[1]

244 One affluent household whose food expenditures for 1949 245 were reported by Sharp et al., (1953, pp. 214-215) produced 453 for home use, 125 kg. of palm sugar valued at 200 baht and 500 coconuts, valued at 450 baht. Home production of both of these was unusual. Few families in Bang Chan grew either sugar palms or coconut palms and expenditures for coconuts and palm sugar were usual. During the major flood of 1942, villagers noted that coconut palms survived whereas all other fruit trees were destroyed. After this, a number of farmers planted coconut palms, but they had not yet begun to produce.

361 311 351 In 1954, about 120 acres (300 rai) of the total of about 2800 acres (7000 rai) of land in the village were used for home sites and home gardens for 336 households. Individual home sites usually varied in area from about one-quarter to one acre, and were occupied by buildings, threshing floor and space for poultry as well as trees and garden space. Portions of this might be under water for several months of the year. Increased home production of fruit and vegetables would in many cases necessitate increasing the size of the home site by purchase, mounding or both. Ordinarily, increased land for the kitchen garden was obtained at the expense of some of the

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[248] 1. In a typical farm garden in Bang Chan one would find [249] bananas growing, and a number of plants used for seasoning curry. Various kinds of chilies, lemongrass, bergamot, of which both rind and leaves are used, and galangal were grown by all families who participated in the dietary study. Both sweet and holy basil were commonly grown. Many families grew one or more varieties of gourds and of eggplant, some of which [247] can be trained to grow on a tree or trellis. The inflorescence of the banana was also used as a vegetable. Leafy vegetables were not commonly cultivated but some families grew (2)phag (2)ka-(2)cheed, a green water plant, in gardens staked out at the edge of the canal, or in a pool, and some had trees, [246] the leaves of which were edible. Swamp cabbage or (2)phag [247] (3)bung grew wild along the edge of the canals and was the most commonly used green leafy vegetable. A few families [248] grew guava, jujube, star gooseberry, Manila tamarind, mango and pineapple.

511 appeared to account in large part for the greater cash expenditures of some families than others. Thus Household 25, with the highest total and per capita cash expenditure for food among these 11 families, consumed a larger quantity of meat than others, and often bought beef, which was the most expensive item purchased. This household bought fruit, meat, and vegetables from venders almost every day. They said "Some do not pay money to buy food, but pick or get it from the canal or gardens --this family cannot live like that because they come from a rich family and cannot live on poor food, so most of the money goes for food." The husband said "I cannot work on poor food." In Group A, Household 12, which had the highest per capita food expenditure, had little home produced food. The wife, who went to Bangkok often, usually bought food when in town. Household 2, with a total cash expenditure for food higher than others, did not have pork or beef on survey days, but ate more (1)plaa (1)thuu, a sea fish which is purchased.

Home Production of Food. - In keeping with the general pattern in the community, the families surveyed produced most of their own food.

Rice. - The hired laborer received rice as part of his pay, but all other families produced their own. Seven households used polished rice exclusively (Table 9). The only one to use home pounded rice in major part was Household 103. This family lived near a little canal which was dry in summer, so they were using home pounded rice when visited toward the end of March and in mid-July (Rounds IV and I). When the observer came in January (Round III), transportation of rice to the mill by boat was possible, but the family members had little farm work to do and were willing to spend some time milling rice. This family, which lived in the home-milling area (see p. 40), took rice to be milled only during the harvest season when they were busy, and the level of the canal was still high. The families which used home pounded rice in minor part did not live in the home-milling area, and apparently milled rice at home only when they were unable to get to the mill by boat.

Fruits and vegetables. - Although the Thai government has attempted to encourage kitchen gardening, few vegetables and fruits were produced by the families which cooperated in the dietary study (Table 10). All families grew bananas, and certain common ingredients of curries: chillies, bergamot, galangal and lemongrass. No other plants were grown by as many as half of the families studied.

Of the edible plants which grew wild, swamp cabbage was used by 7 families on 11 of the 44 survey days. Bamboo shoots, the white flowers of the West Indian pea tree and yellow (2)sa-(5)noo flowers were used by 3 families on one day each;

Table 9. Use of Home-milled and Polished Rice by Households Participating in the Dietary Study

| Group and Code No. | Round of Dietary Study[1] | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | | II | | III | | IV | |
| | HM[2] | P[2] | HM | P | HM | P | HM | P |
| GROUP A | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| 12 | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| 67 | x | | | x | | x | | x |
| 103 | x | | x | | | x | x | |
| 215 | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| 222 | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| Total No. | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| GROUP B | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | x | | x | | | x | | x |
| 20 | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| 21 | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| 23 | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| 25 | x | | | x | | x | | x |
| Total No. | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |

1. For dates, see Table 7, p. 58.

2. HM and P stand for home-milled and polished rice respectively.

Truffles were used as snacks on 2 occasions, and (1) bauaun, (2)phag (2)tob, lotus stems and lotus seeds, the latter as a snack, were used once each. The two groups of families appeared to grow fruits and vegetables and to gather edible wild plants to about the same extent. Two families, one in each group, raised mushrooms during the period when farm work was slack.

per cent in 1949 to thirteen per cent in 1953 suggests that the problem of population pressure on land has become more acute, although it may also indicate changes in the cost structure of rice production which will be discussed in Chapter VI.

Concluding the discussion of this section, we may say that rice growing is the core of the occupational structure of Bangchan around which other occupations rotate. It is not uncommon that one family has several occupations, and in addition to income from these most families get "free" food in the forms of fish and uncultivated aquatic plants. This is the principal reason why families with apparently no cash income still thrive.

It is conceivable that in years of poor rice crop the family put more effort in the secondary occupations; when such an attempt does not work out well -- for example, no work for manual labor and no capital for trivial trade -- an effort is made to obtain subsistence directly from nature.

In any event, every family in the village is engaged in fishing in varying degree. It is because of this fact coupled with the fact that the village fish supply is decreasing that the problem of fish conservation is very important.

Finally, the dynamic nature of rice farming, with varying efforts on getting extra jobs and securing free food outside the farm depending upon the increase and decrease of the rice crop, suggests that the economy of any rice